ARE YOU GETTING CHEMO FOR BREAST CANCER?
HELP LOWER YOUR RISK OF GETTING AN INFECTION

Having breast cancer and going through treatment is extremely stressful, but you’ve got this. Take a deep breath, and read on to arm yourself with facts that will help you.

WHY CHEMOTHERAPY?
Breast cancer is treated in several ways, and often with more than one kind of treatment. Treatment depends on the kind of breast cancer and how far it has spread.

If you are receiving chemotherapy, your medical team believes it can help cure or control your disease or ease your discomfort.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHEMO
Chemotherapy, while effective for killing cancer cells, can also kill your healthy white blood cells, weakening your immune system (sometimes called neutropenia) and increasing your risk of getting an infection.

A low white blood cell count or an infection can affect whether your chemotherapy can continue on schedule.

1 Take Your Temperature Often
A fever is sometimes the only sign of an infection.
Contact your doctor or nurse immediately if you have a temperature of 100.4 or higher, even if it’s after hours.

2 Clean Your Hands Often
You and anyone who comes around you should clean their hands often. Don’t be afraid to ask people to clean their hands.
Use soap and water to wash your hands. If soap and water aren’t available, it’s OK to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

3 Know When You’re At Risk
Ask your medical team when your white blood cell count is likely to be at its lowest since that is when you’re most at risk.

Blood Cell Counts at Lowest Levels
7-12 days after chemo

4 Know the Signs of an Infection
Call your doctor’s office right away if you notice any symptoms of an infection:

• Fever
• Chills and sweats
• Change in cough or new cough
• Sore throat or new mouth sore
• Shortness of breath
• Nasal congestion
• Stiff neck
• Burning, pain or increased urination
• Unusual vaginal discharge or irritation
• Redness, soreness, or swelling in any area, including surgical wounds and ports
• Diarrhea
• Vomiting
• Pain in the abdomen or rectum

Learn more at:

You’ve got this.

PreventCancerInfections.org

This program was made possible through a CDC Foundation partnership with, and funding from, Amgen Oncology. As part of the partnership, the CDC Foundation considered oncology expertise provided by Amgen Oncology.